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MANAGEMENT WEEK

OCTOBER 28 and 29

AN ENGINEER

WHOWER says that a woman can't be a good engineer is all wrong, for we have met a woman who is an engineer, one of the best, in fact. Calm, resourceful, with clean-cut words which went straight to their mark, Mrs. Lillian M. Gilbreth, Consulting Engineer of Montclair, N. J., gave us a few of her views on college people.

"College people are no worse than they were a few years ago, or at any other time. They are no worse than young people who do not go to college," was her

reply when asked if college people were as good as they used to be in the good old times that we are hearing so much about lately.

Mrs. Gilbreth, continuing, said that the college man of today has a far better chance to make good than he had a few years ago. Industry no longer scorns the college graduate, if he forgets that he is a college man as soon as he goes to work. He cannot, however, have a superiority complex and make good.

"A college man today must have," she stated, "three qualities in order to succeed. First, he must be able to sell his personality. That, I think, is the most undeveloped side of his character, yet it is a vital necessity. Second, he must be able to teach others. The position held by teachers in industry is not formally acknowledged as such, but they are teachers nevertheless. Third, the college graduate must have diversified interests, for industry today is of such broad scope that specializing in one field will not be

enough. One must know what other specialists are doing, too.

"A college man must get the viewpoint of the worker first. Personnel workers now start their training in the shops and factories. Formerly, a personnel worker started his work without this training, his success being due to chance. Now, however, the personnel worker learns his work from the bottom up. In a less degree this practice is being followed also in the managerial field. A few years ago it was quite uncommon to hear of a wealthy man's son working in the shops, while today that is the common procedure. There is an increasing demand for college men in these lines of work if they are willing to spend a few years in the shops at actual work, getting the viewpoint of the worker and learning the technique of the work and the processes and methods used."

Mrs. Gilbreth is a booster for the cooperative plan for engineering and commercial college work.

"The whole problem of education is to learn to work. If a student cannot learn when his school work is broken up into small sections, it is due to the lack of proper preparatory school training. That is merely an

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Photo by W. G. H.

MRS. LILLIAN GILBRETH,
Consulting Engineer, Montclair, N. J.

AN ENGINEER

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educational problem and should not be very difficult of solution."

When asked what the future attitude of industry toward women would be, she answered, "Women in the future will do anything that men are doing today, if they can fit themselves for the job as well as men, and are willing to do the work. I think that the curriculum for a woman taking up engineering should be exactly the same as that for men. A woman should go through the whole procedure from A to Z. It really isn't a matter of sex at all. There is no reason why a woman should not be an engineer if she has an engineering type of mind. I do not favor giving the title of engineer to a woman who cannot do the work."

"Does it pay to go in for activities, even at the expense of a point or two in the way of grades?" "Yes, I think it does. To have managed a successful campaign while in college, or to have been a leader in some student movement is worth more to the college man than an extra point or two on his class record. College activities help one to learn to sell himself and afford excellent opportunities for learning the fundamentals of management. If the student can possibly afford to take part in activities he should do so, even if it takes longer for him to graduate. Most college graduates are too young anyhow."

Mrs. Gilbreth is the second woman to become a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Miss Kate Gleason of Rochester, N. Y., being the only woman besides Mrs. Gilbreth to have attained that honor. Mrs. Gilbreth is a graduate of Brown University and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Her first work in connection with engineering subjects was the development of motion study, which gradually led her into other fields until now she is an authority on management problems, mechanical engineering, industrial psychology and related subjects.
